

# DXC Dandelion Program

## 2017 in Review



# Introduction



**Seelan Nayagam**

Managing Director,  
DXC Technology  
Australia and New Zealand

2017 saw the birth of DXC Technology; an innovative new company formed from the coming together of CSC and the Enterprise Services division of Hewlett Packard Enterprises. It was also a new beginning for the Dandelion Program which has continued to thrive over the last year.

Over 12 months we've seen the successful implementation of new programs with clients including the Department of Home Affairs and ANZ bank. We've also launched a number of exciting new initiatives for the Program including the Dandelion Work Experience Program in Canberra with the Australian National University, University of Canberra and Canberra Institute of Technology in conjunction with the Caroline Chisholm School, and, in a first for Australia, the inaugural Autism@Work summit, bringing the Autism community together with employers. Our first neurodiversity hub was launched with Swinburne University, with more hubs to follow in conjunction with Peoplebank, SAP, University of Queensland, and banks ANZ and Westpac. Our neurodiversity hubs enable us to build a high quality pipeline of candidates for our organisation – for clients such as the Australian Federal Government's Department of Human Services, Department of Defence, Department of Home Affairs, and major Australian corporate, ANZ bank.

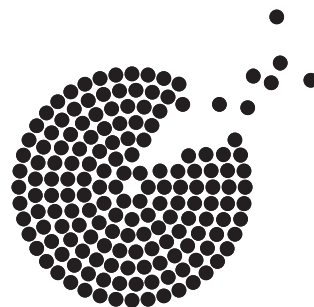
I would like to thank the Dandelion Team, our clients and the autism community for the great success of the Program during 2017, and I look forward to an exciting year ahead.

## Vision

The Dandelion Program is an initiative to build valuable Information Technology, life, and executive functioning skills to help establish careers for people on the autism spectrum.

The implementation and assessment of Dandelion pods (or 'groups') concentrates on identifying and supporting individuals on the autism spectrum with potential to excel in testing, data science, and cyber security roles.

The Dandelion Program grew rapidly in 2017, and this report will cover its most significant developments throughout the year.





# Executive Summary

2017 was a very successful year for DXC Dandelion. Over the year we have established new, critical partnerships that will propel our Autism Work programs to the forefront of workplace inclusion. Some of our key achievements included partnering with ANZ bank to rollout the first Autism at Work program within a major Australian corporate. We have now established six Dandelion teams across Australia, employing over 60 people on the autism spectrum. In addition, we have established key relationships with elite US research institution Cornell University, and the establishment of our first Neurodiversity Hub. We also entered a new partnership with Uptimize, the leading provider of digital neurodiversity training tools. Central to our growth were a number of developments, including the expansion of DXC's Work Experience Program to Canberra, and DXC hosting the 2017 Autism at Work Summit in Sydney, an event devoted to expanding Autism at Work employment programs across Australia. We saw impressive results from Dandelion teams at various government departments, including the Home Affairs Dandelion team going live in February 2017, and continued to cultivate important partnerships with seven universities across Australia.

I am also proud to say that the Program won three significant awards for its innovative efforts during the year, rounding out what has been a fantastic year for Dandelion. I look forward to building on this success in 2018 and beyond.

**Michael Fieldhouse**

Dandelion Program Executive

## Focus for 2018

- Development of mental health management resources to support employers and Dandelion teams.
- Enhancement of tools and methods to enable improved Work Performance Management.
- Establishment of e-training packages to enable wider customer workforce access to autism awareness training on demand.
- Increasing the depth of the programmatic structure of the Dandelion model.
- Refining the recruitment assessment model to make better use of newer techniques and research outcomes to improve outcomes and shorten the time for team start-up.
- Development and rollout of neurodiversity hubs to provide access to employers for students at university who are on the autism spectrum.

## Awards won in 2017

- **ACT Chief Minister's Award for Excellence and Inclusion in Business Award.** Recognises people and organisations making progress to integrate people with disabilities into the community.
- **AAGE Graduate Recruitment Industry Awards: Will Spensley Memorial Award.** Recognises employers that have been most innovative in the graduate market.
- **AIIA iAwards South Australia: Community Services Award.** Australia's leading awards program that recognises both innovative technology companies as well as leading professionals in the digital economy.



The Honourable Andrew Barr, Chief Minister of the ACT (left), with Michael Fieldhouse, DXC Dandelion Program Executive (right).

## Dandelion Program Three-Year Structure

The Dandelion Program is a three-year structured roadmap of transformation initiatives based on business and IT priorities, effort, and learnings. It seeks to improve the comfort and abilities of Dandelion team members in a number of key areas.

The structure integrates feedback from the trainees, autism spectrum consultants, support employees, and new evidence-based research.

Year one focuses on job awareness and consists of on-boarding, introduction to the role, internal training modules, and establishing a pipeline of work with stakeholders, as well as the development of technical and life skills.

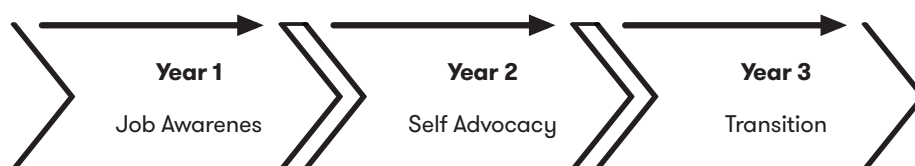
Year two focuses on self-advocacy, intending to cultivate independence and confidence. Dandelion team members complete certifications and training relevant to their role. To build a strong

IT resume, participants keep a record of systems and projects in which they have been engaged.

‘Self-determination’ is developed, encouraging an understanding of one’s own strengths, weaknesses, preferences, learning styles, and needs.

Year three has a focus on transition, with team members developing to be career ready. Members may transition out of the Dandelion team when ready, and numbers can be replenished through the inclusion of successful work experience program (WEP) members. This final year is about setting the trainee up to be capable of holding a career outside of the Dandelion team support structure.

Work experience programs (WEP) are held to create a talent pool that can be mobilised for Dandelion team positions at various employers.



Caroline Chisholm School

## Work Experience Program

In 2016, five participants in the pilot work experience program (WEP) based in Adelaide programmed a NAO robot designed to inspire and maintain classroom engagement for children who would otherwise be uninvolved.

In 2017, DXC extended the WEP to Canberra via partnerships with Australian National University, University of Canberra, and Canberra Institute of Technology.

WEP participants worked with Caroline Chisholm School in Canberra, which has a program teaching children with autism alongside regular studies for neurotypical students, to develop a NAO robot programmed to assist the primary level students with their needs.

## DXC Partners with ANZ bank for the Spectrum Program



In October 2017, ANZ bank announced a partnership with DXC to implement the Dandelion Program as the foundation of a new Autism at Work initiative for ANZ. The initiative is called the Spectrum Program and sits across cyber security and software testing. ANZ is the latest Australian corporate to launch a work program designed for people on the autism spectrum and is DXC's first corporate partner, reflecting the Dandelion Program's expanding reach.

Matt Ormiston, Director of the Spectrum Program and ANZ's Head of Technology, Corporate Optimisation, has a 12-year-old son with autism. He is passionate about driving a program that is "not interested in creating jobs, but in making careers" for individuals on the spectrum. The Spectrum Program's objective is to create an environment wherein people on the autism spectrum are genuinely celebrated and supported.

ANZ's vision is to not only see the autism community itself thrive, but to do something that will change a nation. According to Ormiston, it is paramount to ensure that the Spectrum Program "scales up and out." He asserts that "There's an untapped pool of potential in the autism community and many organisations, ours included, find that the competition for resources are coming from a lot of different areas."

As part of the inaugural Spectrum Program, ANZ has selected and welcomed nine individuals to join its Group Technology function within cyber security and software testing. The company has also reaffirmed the commitment it made in March 2017 to recruit and employ more than 1,000 individuals from under-represented groups by 2020, demonstrating the company's strong belief in diversity.

## Neurodiversity Hub at Swinburne University of Technology



In November 2017, DXC signed a memorandum of understanding with Swinburne University to establish the first Neurodiversity Hub for students in Australia.

The hub will focus on improving the employability of neurodiverse students by helping them obtain work experiences and internships with DXC and its partner organisations.

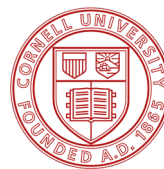
It will provide various support services to students and will benefit employers by providing access to a pipeline of high quality talent and by reducing costs of recruitment and on-boarding.

DXC plans to establish at least one hub in each major state in Australia and in New Zealand.



Dr Susanne Bruyère at Autism at Work Summit in Sydney

## Partnership with Cornell University



The Dandelion Program methodology is being open-sourced through Cornell University's K Lisa Yang and Hock E Tan Institute on Employment and Disability (Yang-Tan Institute) in Cornell's School of

Industrial and Labour Relations (ILR).

This allows other organisations to leverage our knowledge and organisational management tools to dismantle employment barriers for people with autism.

In just one year the repository has had over 1,000 downloads of the 26 materials posted, and nearly 800-page hits from 109 institutions, from 44 countries around the world. Cornell regularly receives new material from DXC to add to this repository.

Dr Susanne Bruyère, Director of the Yang-Tan Institute, gave the keynote address at the Autism at Work Summit in Sydney as part of the Asia-Pacific Autism Conference 2017. Dr Bruyère was

invited by Andrew Davis, CEO, Autism CRC, and Michael Fieldhouse, Emerging Business and Federal Government, DXC Technology. Dr Bruyère also gave presentations to various financial institutions and government agencies on workplace disability inclusion and neurodiversity.

In Spring 2017, Mr Fieldhouse visited Cornell, participated in meetings across the Yang-Tan Institute and was a guest lecturer in ILRHR 6410; Disability Considerations in HR Policy and Practice to a mix of 30 undergraduate and graduate students.

In Summer 2017, Michael Fieldhouse and Dr Bruyère worked collaboratively to create a semester-long credit internship opportunity for ILR School students.

In Spring 2018, two students will be working in Autism at Work programs at ANZ Bank in Melbourne helping to develop and expand their Dandelion Program.



## Partnership with The University of Queensland

2017 was a year of highlights for DXC's collaboration with The University of Queensland and its Business School (UQBS) as part of the the Dandelion Dandelion program.

Under the leadership of Mr. Michael Fieldhouse (DXC) and Dr. Anna Krzeminska (UQBS), the team was awarded \$400,000 from the Autism Cooperative Research Centre (Autism CRC) to assist in improving employment rates amongst Australian adults on the spectrum.

The Australian-first research project investigates the challenges, lessons and most effective practices of large organisations in sustaining and scaling autism employment. It aims to develop a best practice framework to encourage organisations to embrace workplace neurodiversity by recruiting, hiring, and retaining skilled employees on the spectrum.

The team was also awarded \$40,000 from the Australian Institute for Business and Economics (AIBE) to develop a Mental Health Management tool. The tool will help to make autism employment programs more effective and sustainable.

In 2018, the team will present and publish important findings from the two grant collaborations. Furthermore, the team will publish a Special Issue on Neurodiversity at the official journal of the Australian and

New Zealand Academy of Management, the Journal of Management & Organisation. To continue their important research work, the team is preparing a Linkage grant submission with the Australian Research Council (ARC).

In partnership with DXC, UQBS introduced an MBA Internship program that provides students opportunities to improve their management and leadership skills through a 3-week internship with DXC's autism employment program. After the successful completion of their internship, the MBA students presented their experiences and insights to a group of top-level executives from organisations such as Aurizon, Energy QLD, QLD Health, Public Service Commission, and Endeavour Foundation at a Thought Leadership Lunch on Neurodiversity hosted at UQBS' City Campus. The team is looking forward to offering more MBA internship placements.

Finally, the UQBS team introduced Queensland's first Neurodiversity Hub at the UQ Student Employability Centre to facilitate internships and employability training for UQ students on the autism spectrum. The cross-faculty hub is an important aspect of DXC's strategy to establish at least one Neurodiversity Hub in each major state in Australia and New Zealand to build a pipeline of candidates for DXC and its clients.

## Partnership with La Trobe University



The Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC) team at La Trobe University has supported the Dandelion Program by developing research reports that assist with Dandelion implementations. Reports have provided valuable information for DXC on implementations at the Department of Human Services, Department of Defence and Department of Home Affairs.

Notably, the report titled “Benefits of Employing People with Autism”, has provided valuable detail around the benefits of the Dandelion Program, specifically to the individual and his or her family, the organisation, work

productivity and performance, and innovation. OTARC also conducted an analysis confirming the economic benefits of employing people with autism, including significant savings to the government.

Beyond this, OTARC published research critical to the improvement of the Dandelion Program regarding mental health. Their research found that organisation support, advice from co-workers, supportive leadership, the allowance of environmental modifications, and the presence of the autism spectrum consultant facilitated success at work. Workplace challenges

included task-related difficulties, individual factors, social difficulties and distractibility, failure to manage work-related stress, and being perceived to be too ‘honest’ or frank.

Overall, outcomes from the program were mostly positive and included finding a sense of purpose, achieving personal independence, and improvements in social relationships. Summaries of these and other research findings and links to publications can be found at [www.dandelionprogram.com/research](http://www.dandelionprogram.com/research).

## New Global Partnership with Uptimize



In August 2017, DXC announced a strategic partnership with Uptimize, the leading provider of online neurodiversity training tools. The purpose of the partnership is to help distribute the learnings and trainings developed via the Dandelion Program to other organisations starting neurodiversity programs worldwide. The collaboration also included Integrate Autism Employment Advisors (IAEA) and two universities – La Trobe and Cornell – each of whom have also provided research and content input for Uptimize’s latest employer training suite. In 2018, Uptimize will make its online training, which has been tailored for Australian employers,

available via a neurodiversity portal in collaboration with DXC and its partner, Untapped.

“Organisations globally will be able to leverage our experience and knowledge via an electronic platform that will provide employers ‘just in time’ training to assist with building the skills and capabilities needed to hire people on the autism spectrum and retain them. We are looking at this scalable and sustainable solution to not only provide ongoing education and training but to improve integration and inclusivity in the workplace.” - Michael Fieldhouse, Dandelion Program executive, DXC Technology ANZ.

“From the beginning we have set out to build training tools collaboratively, with global thought leaders, our own focus groups, and leading employers. Working with DXC – along with Cornell, La Trobe and Integrate Autism Advisors – allows us to incorporate and scale the distribution of better and better practices in neurodiversity inclusion globally. We look forward to continuing to work with DXC and Untapped in Australia to support other Australian employers in becoming neurodiversity smart”. - Ed Thompson, CEO, Uptimize.





# Autism at Work Summits in San Francisco and Sydney

In April 2017, DXC participated in and sponsored an Autism at Work summit in San Francisco, California. The event included panel presentations from leaders of Autism at Work programs, discussing lessons learned from the programs, from new hires, and from prospective employees. The summit also had sessions devoted to discussions on the various aspects of Autism at Work programs - planning, building, running, and sustaining.

The event also included an online job fair. Around 700 prospective candidates registered and met with recruiters for DXC's Dandelion Program, among others. In September 2017, DXC and Autism CRC hosted the Autism at Work Summit in Sydney. The theme of this conference was "Growing with Autism." The theme of this event reflected the shift in autism

research to focus on the whole life of people with autism, instead of a sole focus on the early years. At the Summit employers and managers learned about best practices for engaging the skills and interests of employees on the autism spectrum. The Summit also detailed the opportunities and benefits to be derived from autism employment programs. Following the event, there was an employment fair to provide opportunities for individuals and their families to interact with employers, employees, and service providers.



Autism at Work Summit in Sydney

# Dandelion Teams at the Department of Human Services



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Human Services**

The Dandelion team at the Adelaide Department of Human Services (DHS) had another great year, delivering all assigned projects on time, with superior quality. Team members continued to build professional qualifications, with three members gaining new certifications from the International Software Testing Qualifications Board (ISTQB). ISTQB awards internationally-recognised certifications to professionals who must demonstrate practical knowledge of the fundamental concepts of software testing.

Additionally, several members achieved critical life milestones. Two bought and moved into their own homes, and one moved out of his parents' home for the first time. Two others became parents, and one left the program to become an Australian public servant in DHS via the STEM ICT recruitment scheme. Although the team completed its third and final year of traineeship, DHS signed a 1-year contract renewal, securing employment for the remaining team members through 2018.

In 2017, the Dandelion team at Brisbane DHS commenced its third and final year, with astounding progress technically and socially since inception. Members worked on projects of various sizes, providing test analysis and execution to deliver quality products to customers. Five members now work independently from the team, and all participants are doing ground-breaking work for the WPIT project. More members passed ISTQB professional qualification for software testing, and others are studying for advanced qualifications. One member has purchased a house, and another was admitted to DHS' STEM Program.

The Dandelion team in Canberra is split into two sub-teams. One resides within Business Information and Data Services (BIDS), where the core business is in testing. The team consists of six members, one who is full-time and another soon to be full-time. The team has finished its second year, and the members continue to grow. One member is learning to be a data modeller, and two are working independently in a project team. Regarding life skill milestones, one member obtained his driver's license and purchased a car. The other sub-team also has six members, and is part of the Service Operations Branch, working in Monitoring and Automation Operations. All team members are distributed in with the DHS staff in the two sections. They have all progressed in their focus of expertise, working on certifications in Dynatrace and Red Hat. Between the team members, there have been two house moves, one house purchase, and one new baby.

Members have also flown the flag for the Dandelion Program, DXC and ASD at the DHS International Day of People with Disability events, and on ABC TV's current affairs show, Lateline.

## Work Experience Questionnaire

Originally developed by the University of Haifa and the Ono Academic College in Israel, the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre at La Trobe University revised the 2016 Work Performance Questionnaire (WPQ) assessment tool. This will be rolled out in 2018 along with a new Autism Work Skills Questionnaire. OTARC is committed to working with DXC and organisations implementing the Dandelion Program to identify and evaluate evidence-based instruments and methodologies that can support and improve the program, which will ultimately serve to enhance positive outcomes for employees with autism.

## Dandelion Team at the Department of Home Affairs



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Home Affairs**

In February 2017, the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) started its first Dandelion Program with 11 team members in their Enterprise Testing and Quality Assurance section. 12 months into the program, eight out of 11 members are working full-time, an outstanding achievement in such a short period of time.

The team also has seven members acquiring professional certification in testing via the ISTQB foundation level, and six members achieved these certifications only six months into the program. DHA looks at outplacements via two models: (1) transition of team members to the broader testing team and (2) find a best-fit occupation based on individual skills and attributes. Via these models, DHA successfully transitioned four individuals out of the team, marking yet another remarkable achievement for the DHA.

## Dandelion Team at the Department of Defence



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Defence**

The Dandelion team at the Department of Defence (DOD) has reached the halfway mark of the program, and the DOD are pleased with the team's development.

The team is driving major capability change via enhancements to client systems and services, and for the first time ever, recently produced operational client reporting, which is now informing client decision-making.

The team is now a trusted key strategic partner with its clients and has achieved a wealth of personal accomplishments in 2017. Two members are working full-time, five are working in outplacement roles with various client teams, and two are continuing their education. In 2018, the team will continue with personal and technical development and training, client project work, and career preparations.

## Harvard Business Review

In December 2017, the Harvard Business Review (HBR) published an article, co-authored by Michael Fieldhouse, which supports the business case for Autism at Work programs. It explains why the Australian Defence organisation is recruiting people with autism into its cyber security analyst program. So far, evidence shows high performance amongst the new hires. The article details other benefits of Autism at Work programs, especially among government and society. It cites a PWC study that shows neurodiversity employment programs can result in hundreds of millions of dollars in benefits to a nation's economy. The full article can be found at <https://hbr.org/2017/12/why-the-australian-defence-organization-is-recruiting-cyber-analysts-on-the-autism-spectrum>.



**For further information about the  
DXC Dandelion Program, go to:  
[www.dxc.technology/dandelion](http://www.dxc.technology/dandelion)**

#### **About DXC Technology**

DXC Technology (DXC: NYSE) is the world's leading independent, end-to-end IT services company, helping clients harness the power of innovation to thrive on change. Created by the merger of CSC and the Enterprise Services business of Hewlett Packard Enterprise, DXC Technology serves nearly 6,000 private and public sector clients across 70 countries. The company's technology independence, global talent, and extensive partner network combine to deliver powerful next-generation IT services and solutions. DXC Technology is recognized among the best corporate citizens globally. For more information, visit [DXC.technology](http://DXC.technology).